

KWSC Radio

PROGRAM INFORMATION

"Cyclical Programming"

This is a creaky, part-time, highly erratic, non-commercial, 3000-miles-into-the-hills radio station. A very beloved station.

Pullman has four thousand citizens. The surrounding region 200,000 booted and flannel-shirted inhabitants.

We theorize: "You can't make them listen."

Radio manufacturers know it - they even provide the push buttons to tune out fast. But educators haven't become fully aware of it, and lots of commercial powerhouses haven't.

There are two audiences which non-commercial stations can serve. One is the school through classroom broadcasts. We know that good recordings made available to individual (as they should be) teachers in the many individualistic (as they can be) schools do a fine job. The other is adult education. We work here on the latter, exclusively, and that's where we had to invent Cyclical Programming. Remember those booted, flannel-shirted citizens. Not for the intellectuals, who could understand anything but the plain folks, who are in this and neighboring states (in which our signal ranges).

Popular (not over-scored and not jazz) music is the starting point. It is the most popular with the greatest number of our listeners - and this station likes to have everyone listen to it. News rates a hot second place as do our special news-on-the-spot shows (thanks to 4 tape recorders).

How $16\frac{1}{2}$ Daily Hours
Are Programmed

WPKS

27th YEAR - 1250 KILOCYCLES

We start a period with either popular music or news. In either case, after 15 minutes we are deep in popular music.

We progress in a musical cycle, into familiar music, novelty, to semi-popular concert, into semi-classical and classical. Then back to news and the most popular.

The most important thing in making a music schedule for our audience is to keep the transition periods as fully interesting and as excellently patterned as the start (popular music, which easily attracts) and the conclusion (classical music, for which we have superb programmers). Our cycles usually take two hours to complete. And we choose the transitional "novelty" and "semi-popular" with the greatest of care and pre-broadcast tests.

We have found that most of our "popular" audience stays with us right into the "classical"; that most of our "classical" audience hunts for its classics and will join us early because - by golly - they know it's on the way.

In any case, our "semi-classical" and "concert" audience is as large as our "popular" audience. But IT ISN'T IF we don't go carefully through the full cycle.

A sudden or sharp transition sends the "popular" listeners scurrying.

Now, to carry out the purpose of all this - "The longer they listen the more nearly we achieve our purpose of educating them to good music." We are

convinced of this, only we never use (or feel we are up to using) the word "educate." People like to educate themselves.

The programmed musical cycles are long in the mid-morning and mid-afternoon, shorter in the late afternoon. And we warm up with 2 hours of popular music and news first thing in the morning.

I think you'd like listening to us.

As we use popular music and news for the base of building a daytime audience of large proportions, we use other appeals at noon and in the first part of the evening to build an audience for our other, largely non-musical, night-time programs.

In the one hour 12 to 1, at noon, we shift fast. Four 15-minute shows of (1) familiar music, (2) farm news, (3) straight news and special events (including politics of the State once a week), and (4) semi-classical music.

No industries in our area. Richest wheat lands in the world. Everyone is influenced by agriculture.

A full-time farm editor works solely on that 15 minutes at noon. The straight news is "out-of-step" with net newscasts on the Pacific coast and it follows the farm information. The music catches the low and the high brows. Between and through all we plug our night shows, for the hour the whole family returns home, whether on farms or in towns.

We never scrap a well-planned schedule in order to be educational. Offered a 15-minute morning "homemakers" program, we turn it down if it kills audience, and we bring it up again, all done over, in a 30-minute once-a-week documentary on the problems of family relations - at night, blocked into semi-dramatic periods.

Come night, we shift fast from 6 to 7. Four shows of (1) sports new, (2) popular music (3) children's story, and (4) familiar music - between which the night-time is promoted - are our oldest and best known programs, dating back at least ten years. With these, we've forgotten cyclical programming, for the day, on Tuesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Monday and Wednesday nights we put into cyclical music programs the best there is. But the other three nights we use the back-to-back block technique, backing dramatic education to just plain dramatic.

That is our "system."

We do not run only those programs which "are in keeping with an educational station," for we are convinced that in an area such as ours such programming reaches only those who are already interested in cultural subjects - which is not our particular aim. We prefer by all means subtly, to "educate" the people who "need education the most." If you can interest a person by talking to him about the things that interest him, then it may be possible for you to interest him in the things which interest you.

Ingenuity and ideas are the stock in trade of the non-commercial broadcaster.

Our aim is to prove we can perform a service not to the minority but to the majority.

Now into those daytime musical cycles goes showmanship. A different MC or announcer every hour with fresh stuff. People dialing around do not dial around during the day to pick up talk, drama, and other noises - they dial first to music, and that's us, for all knob-turners.

The networks' weakest, day to day average, night-time period is 9:30-10:00 p.m. out here, and consequently our strongest. Next best: 6:00-6:30 p.m. (4 nights out of 6). We put into those two periods our most popular evening programs - "the Wayne King Show," "Proudly We Hail," "A House in the Country," "Favorite Story," etc. - comedies, music, dramas of top calibre. We don't let up for a summer hiatus. When we have a dramatic show or a comedy show at 6 or 9:30 p.m. we back it up with an educational show that is produced with drama or with comedy as the tenor of its handling - our "Boy of the Bunchgrass" (education in palatable dramatic form), or "The Wigglesworths" or "Here's to Veterans" (education in excellent comedy formats). This is block programming. After one-hour of drama or comedy, we present classical music, followed by news, and back to more drama or comedy. Each night, then, at 6:00 p.m. and at 9:30 p.m., we lay down a sheerly popular half-hour of entertainment, and then back it, at 6:30 or 10:00 p.m. (and frequently also the opposite direction - at 5:30 and 9:00) with more of the same but with a quiet emphasis on adult education.

We do a lot of sports remotes and public interest events. These are aired at 7:30 p.m., every night we can do so. With first, a popular comedy show, then a humorously-done educational show, then a collegiate basketball airing, then classical music and news, followed by a popular comedy and another half hour of education, one evening a week (and each evening is blocked similarly, horizontally and vertically) is mighty interesting. And in our last half-hour of air-time each night we let loose with an "idea" program that might be just anything.

Our broadcast hours are 6:30 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., and that's how they're filled.

We trust this gives you a picture of what the devil we're up to.

Scanned from the National Association of Educational Broadcasters Records
at the Wisconsin Historical Society as part of
"Unlocking the Airwaves: Revitalizing an Early Public and Educational Radio Collection."



A collaboration among the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities,
University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Communication Arts,
and Wisconsin Historical Society.

Supported by a Humanities Collections and Reference Resources grant from
the National Endowment for the Humanities



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